

Linda Clair
Evening Meeting and Weekend Meditation Retreat
8–10 November 2019, Barcelona, Spain
Transcription from Audio Recordings

File 2b – Saturday morning discussion

Linda: So any question? How are you going H.?

Question: I'm just surprised at how intense the sensations are in my body again because I don't get this at home. But I'm really appreciating that they're there and I don't feel resistance to them.

Linda: Good.

Question: Especially my chest, I think that's new for me. It almost feels like anxiety but I don't think it is.

Linda: You haven't had it there before?

Question: No, I don't think so. It actually started about a month ago.

Question: Regarding anxiety, I've had a full year. I thought the reason was that I quit smoking, but verging on depression. I had to go to my doctor and ask for something for it. It's been the whole year.

Linda: How do you feel now?

Question: I'm better. I don't have so much anxiety now. It was a lot before.

Linda: You look different to me.

Question: That's because I am different. I'm also more peaceful, accepting, now because I've had circulation problems and could barely walk.

Linda: So really, you haven't had just a year of anxiety, you've had a lifetime of anxiety. When you start looking deeply into your psyche, you realise how anxious you are. You were probably much more anxious before but you were so involved in it that you didn't realise the depth of it.

Question: I wasn't conscious of it.

Linda: So this is conscious suffering, which is much harder to bear than unconscious suffering. But as you're finding, it does lead to a state of much less suffering and eventually no suffering. It's why so few people do this, because they don't want to face their own suffering. So very good.

Question: I'm wondering if there are any clues as to what happens beyond bodily experience. In the past I have had many beautiful transcendental experiences, which when I was experiencing them, I felt that, "This is it!" But then I'm left with nothing, my normal status quo in the mind.

Linda: What sort of practices have you been doing?

Question: Osho meditations, tantra, stretching, dancing, mostly active with silences afterwards.

Linda: Have you done much meditation like this before? (No.) What attracted you to come here? (A friend's recommendation.) What was your question again?

Question: Clues as to what happens beyond bodily experiences? Is there anything more?

Linda: We're always looking for something more. But really what happens is that it becomes less and less. What you're looking for you've never felt before. There are milestones along the way but really, it's a waste of time and energy to try to figure out where you are in this process. One of the reasons that it's so valuable to have a teacher is that you can put your trust in them. You'll have lots of experiences along the way but when realisation actually happens there'll be no question about it. So clues? Don't look for clues. Trust your body but never trust your mind.

The signs of progress that everyone looks for when they're doing this usually lie in your daily life. We often think that a transcendental experience is a sign of progress but the real signs of progress lie in your behaviour and habits in your daily life. Usually it's an absence of something, as I was saying before, rather than the presence of something. We do tend to think that we're going to become, and I did too, more special, more something, more presence. But what happens and keeps happening no matter what state you're in is that things just keep falling away. You're still very grounded in your body but you don't believe that you are just your body.

So as I said last night, it's impossible to describe what this absence is like because you've never completely felt it before. It's a total absence of judgment, or maybe I shouldn't say total because it's never actually total while you're still in the body, in my experience. To most people probably, that doesn't sound very attractive. But it's the most amazing thing, to live your life with an absence of fear and judgment, not just with some things but with everything.

So that's really the only clue I can give you. You are not your body. You are not your mind. And who you are becomes irrelevant. We all think we're going to find out who we are but that's not really what you're looking for. So all the practices that you've done are really preparation for this. You can't really imagine what it's like living a life where there's no right, there's no wrong, there's no good, there's no bad – there are no opposites.

How are you P.?

Question: I'm not well. I woke up this morning feeling like I might throw up. But I don't think I'm going to die. 😊

Linda: Not yet. (laughter)

Do you think it's something you ate? (Maybe.) Well, just take it easy. Try and have a rest at lunch time. So just try to survive the retreat. (laughter) Don't see it as a waste of time. I'm not joking when I say "survive."

Question: I guess people have to come here to die. (Yes.) I hope it's not physically above all because of my partner. (laughter)

Interjection: Don't worry; his life insurance policy is paid up. 😊

Linda: I think he's saying he loves you... (laughter)

So just try and take it as easy as you can. Sickness, in a way, prevents you pushing. So if you need to sit on a chair or lie down, do that.

Question: You're making us do a lot of effort.

Linda: No, you're here voluntarily.

Question: Of course, but I think it's the energy you give us. That's what makes us feel like that.

Linda: Yes.

Question: Now that I'm here I almost don't care about what I was going to say but I'm going to say it anyway. I thought this morning I came without expectation and feeling relaxed. But no, now when I sit here it's all turmoil in my mind, silly stuff, and projecting into the future. And I keep wondering, "Why have I come this long way to do this," when I should be trying to make the most of this short retreat, especially with this beautiful group. But now I don't care anymore. All that you say is true; in my daily life I have gained a lot of peace. Things that surround me can barely shake me except my family – my brother.

Linda: That's normal. The first day of a retreat is often like this. And you realise you do have expectations. So often the first day can be a settling in and can be quite tumultuous. There can be quite a bit of resistance to being here. So you'll feel the effects of being here afterwards. What we tend to do is want immediate results. And usually too much importance is put on what happens during a meditation session.

People tend to think that if they're not sitting there in a very quiet state they're not meditating properly, that something is wrong. But just sitting here with that turmoil going on and staying here is enough. And it doesn't mean that it will be like that all weekend. Tomorrow will probably be quite different. So particularly on the first day, just put up with it. Let the energy do its work and take you over.

Question: Why when I look at you do I always feel like crying?

Linda: Because I love you, I don't judge you. It doesn't matter what you say to me, I won't judge you.

Question: Since earlier this year I've been feeling a sensation I could call pleasure but it's not that. After lunch when I have a nap and at night before going to bed I really enjoy the sensation that I'm giving up the mind, or abandoning the mind. But also I really like sleeping. I don't know if this is part of the process.

Linda: Really, in the end, it's the mind that gives up, gives up trying to control you because it realises you're never going to give up. So eventually it surrenders. But it's very important not to fight it or see it as the enemy but to use your intelligence to see how it works.

Question: I still have some questions about teachers. When someone is enlightened does he or she still have bad qualities, defects?

Linda: What you see as bad qualities might be different, it's a very personal thing.

Question: For example, authoritative or abusive or egocentricity? I've had a different experience than you with regard to teachers. The ones I've met have not had the qualities that you said you saw in your teachers. They helped me but they were abusive and authoritarian.

Linda: People have a lot of expectations about someone who says they're enlightened. And they tend to put their personal judgment of how one should behave when one is enlightened, onto the teacher.

With my teachers, how they were with what was left of their personality did not concern me. And no, they weren't abusive – I didn't feel they were but maybe some people might have. My teacher in Japan was apparently, years ago, very fierce.

It's a tricky thing. You never become this perfect human being. You just become authentic and you stop trying to behave the way that you think people think you should behave. So I would say that as long as you're in the body, there's a bit of ego there, just by the fact that you're in the body. I can only really talk about my experience and I can see that it's becoming less and less and less. In the early stages of realisation I did feel this pressure in myself to be completely pure. But then I realised that, that's not it.

Question: I think there are two faces in everything. So somebody can be loving but at the same time be egocentric.

Linda: When you realise there is still a bit of ego there – and unless someone keeps practicing, even in the enlightened state – that bit of ego that's left can become a bit of an issue.

Interjection: What do you mean about keeping on practicing?

Linda: You can tend to feel you don't need to meditate anymore, but it's actually more important than ever, for a different reason because it keeps you grounded. There are huge amounts of energy going through your system and I can see that it could put you off balance very easily.

People don't talk about this much because they think once you're enlightened, that's it, that's the end, you're perfect and there's nothing else. But in my experience, you mature more and more as time goes on. And it's very important to stay grounded and humble. Otherwise that bit of ego that's left can take over again – not to the same degree but in a different way. And if you combine that with being a teacher and have a lot of people worshiping you and saying how perfect you are, it can in a strange way destabilise you.

Question: How do you stay humble?

Linda: By admitting that you're not perfect, that there is still some ego there, and by keeping sitting. But the sitting becomes a joy rather than a chore. You see there is residual ego there but that becomes the joy because as soon as you see it, it lessens, it goes, and you feel even freer.

In the initial stages of enlightenment you can feel very charismatic; the energy is quite different, it can be very magnetic. People can be attracted to that when often the person is not really ready to teach. In the Zen tradition the student, even once they're realised, needs to stay around the teacher for a while until they become firmly established in that state.

Question: Even if you're enlightened your personality is still there. If you were arrogant maybe you continue being arrogant.

Linda: Yes, certain traits are there but you don't identify with them anymore.

Question: I've been helped very much by a teacher who is very arrogant. A friend of mine said he's not a teacher but he helped me. Even if I see his arrogance and he has a personality that I don't like, he has a method that is helping me a lot.

Linda: Yes, you don't have to like your teacher.